61.Roman Stronghold and Belogradchik Fortress

Location. 34 T 0635296 E; 4831432 N. Geosite is located in southwestern part of the town of Belogradchik, emblematic for the Geopark rock and architectural complex.
Category. Geosite of non-geological value with particularly high aesthetic, historical and cultural value, has become the emblem of the rocks.
Geological setting. The Roman stronghold is in the sandstones of the fifth packet of the type section of Belogradchik Formation and the fortress was built on conglomerates and sandstones of the second, third and fourth wad.
Geoconservation characteristics. Belogradchik Fortress and Roman stronghold "Kaleto" are the most visited places in the Geopark. They are of especially high aesthetic, historical and cultural value, attracting annually tens of thousands of visitors. Kaleto occupies the highest and naturally inaccessible part of the rocks (Pl. 61 a,b). This is an antique Roman stronghold built with the red sandstones of the Belogradchik Formation. The walls of the medieval fortress are built of hewn stones of Middle Jurassic sandstones of the Kreshtenitsa and Oreshets Members of the Kichera Formation.
Historical data. To strengthen its role in the Balkans, the Roman Empire is made a lot of efforts in building roads and fortifications. In the area of Belogradchik has preserved remains of many strongholds and paths that served to transport goods from Thrace and gold mined in the Thracian lands. Ancient fortress on top of the rocks was built in the III century AD with blocks of red sandstone of the Belogradchik Formation (Pl. 61 c,d). There are two 5 meter deep artificial wells for rainwater harvesting (Pl. 61 e). It occupies the highest and naturally inaccessible part of the rocks for control the way from the Danube port Ratsiaria to the interior of the empire. After the division of the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western in 359, the Balkans became part of the Byzantine Empire. In the sixth century Emperor Justinian I decided to strengthen the fortress, but it was destroyed during the invasion of the Slavs. Then as a result of the alliance between Slavs and Bulgarians in 681 new Bulgarian state was created and the fortress was restored again.

In the Middle Age a new fortification wall was built around the Roman fortress and it became one of the strongholds of the First and Second Bulgarian State. At the end of the Second Bulgarian Empire (second half of the 14^{th} century) Tsar Ivan Alexander added new walls of the fortress, which is part of the independent Vidin Kingdom of his son Tsar Ivan Sratsimir. For a short time (1365-1369) it was conquered by the Hungarian King Ludovic I. In 1396, the turks conquered the Balkans and the Belogradchik fortress falls into the Ottoman Empire. It retains its medieval Bulgarian appearance until the early 19^{th} century when the major reconstruction and extension under the control of French and Italian fortificators started (Pl. 61 g-l). Construction of the new wall begun in 1806 and was completed in 1837. It gives a modern appearance of Belogradchik fortress with an area of 10 211 m^2. The walls are built with blocks of white sandstones of the Kreshtenitsa Member and yellow sandstones of the Oreshets Member of the Kichera Formation (Pl. 61 m,n). Probably the stone blocks are mined by the huge blocks of Kichera Formation below the Belogradchik Arc. They were processed in situ and then transported to Kaleto. An interesting debate took place after the liberation in 1878, when the local authorities offer the people to use the stones of the fortress walls for building. The people refuse and thanks to this the fortress is preserved until today.

In the whole rock assemblage is named just one rock - Haidut Velko. This is the most representative and most visited part of the rocks, immortalized in the watercolors of Felix Kanitz

1873 (Pl. 61 f,h). It is the subject of numerous works of art, photographs, publications and films, even Hollywood productions. The thousands of tourists will soon have the opportunity to examine the geological and archaeological heritage in the new visitor center near the fortress (Pl. 61 l).

Plate 61: a,b – general view of Kaleto; **c,d** – the outer fortress wall and the interior are built by the red sandstones of the Belogradchik Formation; **e** – interior of the Roman stronghold Kaleto; **f** – watercolor of Felix Kanitz 1873;

Таблица 61: g – the inner entrance to the fortress; **h** – watercolor of Felix Kanitz 1873; **i,j** – interior of the fortress**;** **k** – the outer entrance; **l** – the new visitor centre; **m,n** – fortress wall was built with stone blocks of the Kreshtenitsa (white) and Oreshets (yellow) Members of the Kichera Formation

62. Latin Stronghold

Location. 34 T 0635190 E; 4831233 N. Geosite is located 200 m SW from the entrance of the Belogradchik fortress, near the astronomical observatory.
Category. Geosite of historical value.
Geological setting. Geosite is entirely in the upper part of the second packet of the type section of Belogradchik Formation, represented by alternating red sandstones and conglomerates.
Morphology and genesis. Latin fortress was fortified observation post, built during the Roman Empire. It is located on the crest of the cliff, which starts from the Belogradchik fortress and continues west through the Redoubt to Sbegovete, south of Dubravka village. Latin fortress is situated on a high single rock, surrounded on all sides by vertical walls with a height of 10-15 m (Pl. 62 a,b). The upper landing is reached by a steel staircase on the east side (Pl. 62 b,d). On the rock is made fortified facility with battlements carved in the sandstone from the south and west side (Pl. 62 c,d). The eastern and northern sides of the fortress have been strengthened with additional walls built with blocks of Kichera Formation (Pl. 15 e,f). On top of the stronghold is situated 10-15 m wide landing.
Surrounding landscape. Latin fortress is located in a forest, in which there is a path along the cliffs to the east. It reveals a picturesque view on the valley south of the fortress (Pl. 15 g) and spectacular view of the western part of the Belogradchik Rocks – the Wedding and Sbegovete (Pl. 15 h).
Sustainability and protection measures. The rock is very strong and does not need special protection measures. It is necessary to put information signs near the Belogradchik fortress and to keep the steel ladder.
Access. Latin fortress is located about 300 m southwest of the entrance of the Belogradchik Fortress. It can be reached by the road along the fortress to the observatory.

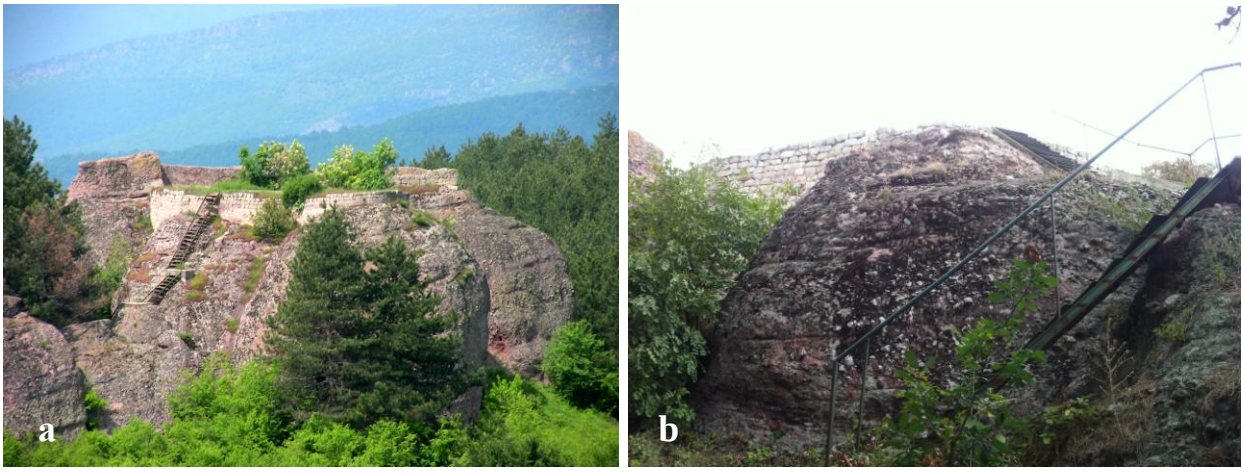


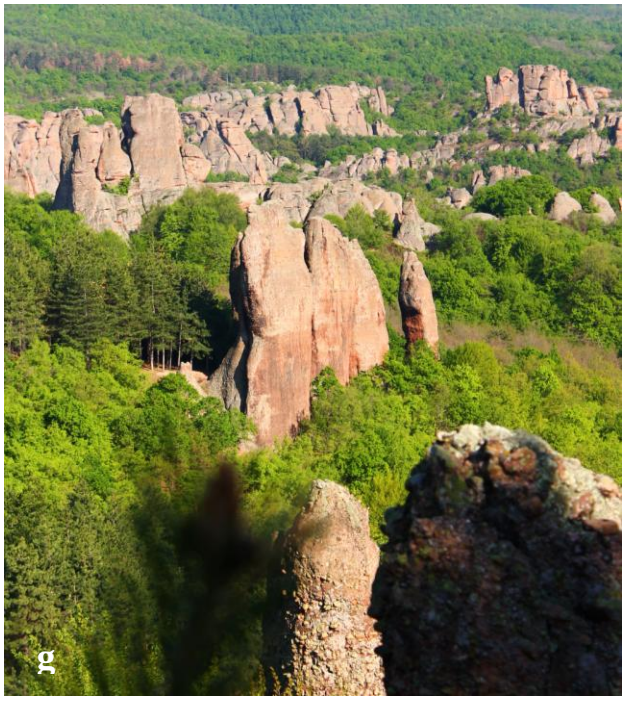
Plate 15: a,b – General view of the Latin Stronghold from the east; **c,d** – the landing inside the Latin stronghold; **e,f** – the walls from the east and north side; **g** – the valley south of the stronghold; **h** – view to the western part of the Belogradchik Rocks

c

d

e

f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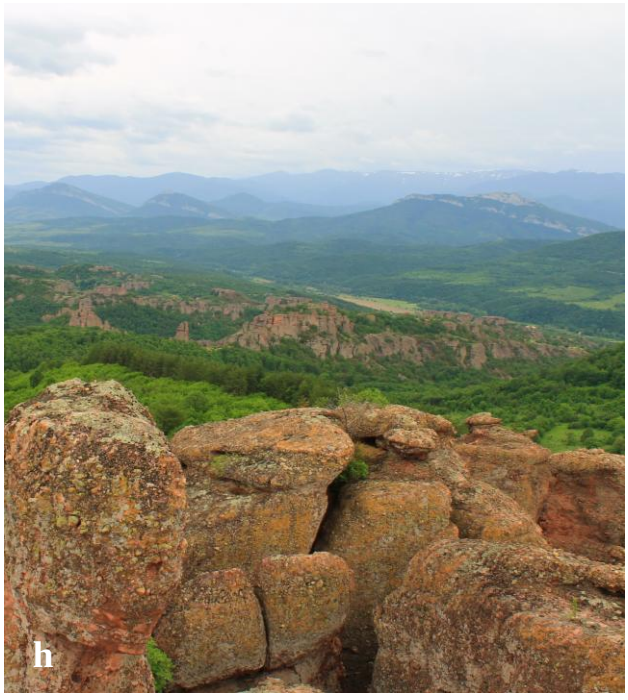
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63. Latin stronghold near Izvos

Location. 34 T 0636237 E; 4829253 N. It is located in Markashnitsa suburbs 1,2 km NE of Izvos village in the suburb "Markashnitsa".
Category. Geosite of historical value: difficultly accessible elevated part of the southern rim of Belogradchik rocks used as a strategic point for observation the vicinity at the time of the Roman Empire.
Geological setting. Latin stronghold Izvos is located in the third packet of the type section of Belogradchik Formation, built of red sandstones and gravelites with rare conglomerate particles and lenses of matrix supported conglomerates.
Morphology and genesis. Latin stronghold Izvos is situated on highly elevated rock between suburbs valley and Rock arc Markashnitsa (Pl. 63 a-c). The only approach to the rock is from the northwest where remains of wall and residential buildings (pottery) are available. In the fortress are found remains of Roman bricks and pottery, stairs carved into the rock and holes that likely served for wooden pillars of defense facilities.
Surrounding landscape. The area of the stronghold is surrounded by forest and it has a panoramic view of the entire neighborhood. To the north is the town of Belogradchik (Pl. 63 g), and to the NW - Kaleto in the Belogradchik fortress and Latin stronghold, which has a direct visual connection for signaling when approaching caravans of goods and gold of Moesia and Thrace (Pl. 63 h). Rock arc with vineyards Markashnitsa is visible to the east (Pl. 63 s), and Izvos village to the west (Pl. 63 k). Other relatives are geotopes Jabba 1 km west Lepenitsa cave 600 m east, Sabubin stone 1 km east and Borovitsa Stone - 3,5 km east.
Sustainability and protection measures. The rocks are stable, but in its current form the stronghold is inaccessible to visit. It is necessary to draw a path and to put signboards in Izvos and suburbs, as well as equipment of observation post.
Access. Access to the geosite is from the west, from the suburbs of Izvos.

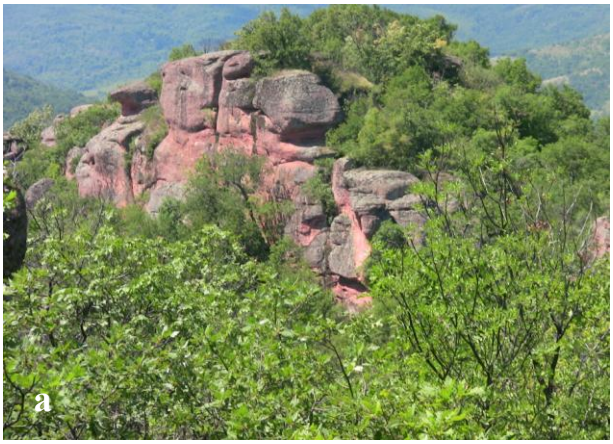

Plate 63: a-c – The Latin stronghold near Izvos is part of the rock arc in the southern part of the Belogradchik rocks in markashnitsa area; **d** – holes in the rock for wooden pillars of defense facilities; **e** – stairs carved into the sandstone from the eastern part of the stronghold; **f** – Roman bricks and pottery; **g** – view to the north to Belogradchik town; **h** – view to the NW to Kaleto and the Latin stronghold near the fortress; **i** – view to the east to the Sokol arc and the vineyards in Markashnitsa; **j** – view to Izvos village

c

d

e

f

g

h

i

j

64. Stronghold near Granitovo village

Location. 34 T 0636911 E, 4837016 N at elevation Gradishte (512.1) east of Granitovo village.
Category. Geosite of historical value.
Geological setting. Geosite is located among the limestones of West Balkan Carbonate Group.
Description. The site includes poorly preserved walls of an ancient fortification, representing Latin stronghold. It is located about elevation Gradiste (512.1), whose western slope is inaccessible (Pl. 64 a,b). The only remains of the fort are carved out of the limestone trenches on the south side, which were reinforced with brick walls (Pl. 64 c,d,e). Evidence of this are the remains of Roman bricks. Before the walls were located limestone slabs of the thin-bedded limestones of the West Balkan Carbonate Group, which probably served as a cover against arrows and spears. Besides bricks are found the remains of pottery, which indicates that there were household premises.
Surrounding landscape. The stronghold is situated on a limestone basis, which crowns the height of elevation. It is located above the impressive cliffs east of Granitovo village where is the type section of the Granitovo Member in Podmola area and the additional section of the Oreshets Member of the Kichera Formation.
Sustainability and protection measures. Activities that should be included in the development plan of the Geopark are: the signposting of the road near Granitovo at the fork to Belogradchik town from the international road E 79 near Bella village and information boards in Granitovo village with data on the geology of the area and the ruins around the ancient fortress.
Access. The stronghold is accessible east of Granitovo village on the western slope of elevation Gradiste (512.1).

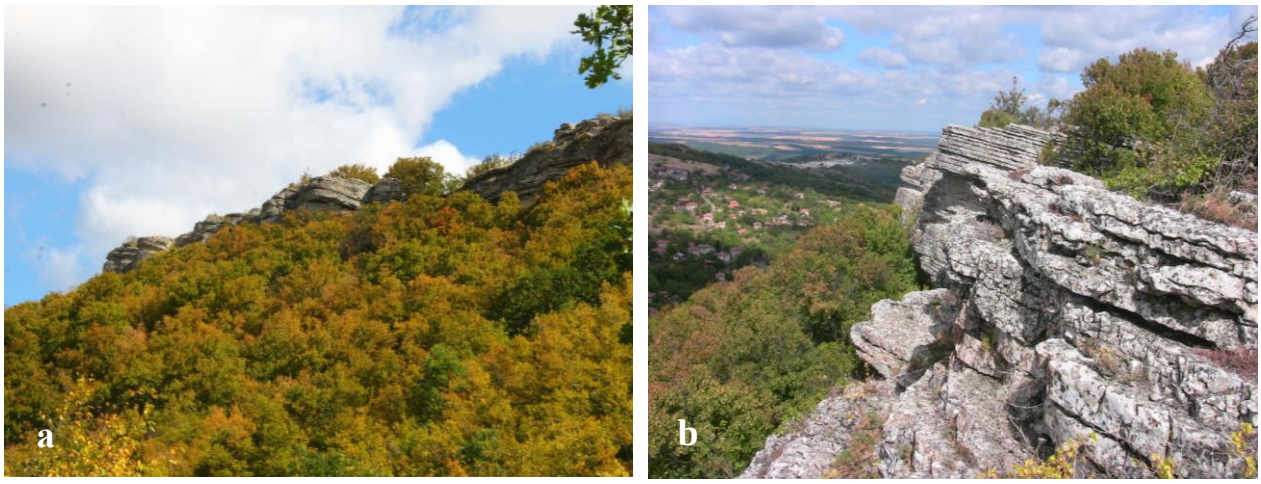

Plate 64: a,b – The western part of the stronghold near Granitovo village, representing naturally inaccessible rock cliff of the limestones of the West Balkan Carbonate Group

Plate 64: c,d – documenting of the antique stronghold disposed on a large area around the elevation Gradishte (512,1); **e** – inaccessible rock cliff from the west is extended with additionally built defensive walls of limestone blocks, upgraded with brick wall, evidence of which are the fragments of roman bricks

65. Antique road station Anishte

Location. 34 T 0636237 E; 4829253 N. It is situated 1,2 km east of Granichak village.
Category. Geosite of achaeological value: Late Antique Road station.
Geological position. The site is located on the river terrace of the Salash river. In the vicinity of "Anishte" reveal basalts, andesite-basalt lava-breccia and tufts of the Rayanovtsi Formation of Late Carbonirerous age.
Description. It consists of a central building with a representative apsidal shape surrounded by six additional rooms and bath complex (Pl. 65 a-d). Along with the large number of bronze and copper coins from IV-V century, here are found also specimens from I-II century AD. There are abundant fragments of pottery and building ceramics that help documentating and dating of the site. Weapons and tools of bronze and iron age, bronze trim, seals and jewelry are also found. Widespread evidence of fires related to the Hun and Gothic invasions that ended the life of this late ancient settlement structure are present. "Anishte" is located near the route of the Roman road linking the ancient Ratsiaria with Naissus (today Nish).
Connection with geology. The walls were built of river debris (Pl. 65 e,f), among which are different particles of Rayanovtsi Formation and other units cropping out along the riverbed of Salash river: gravelites, conglomerates, sandstones (Pl. 65 e), siltstones, argillites, granodiorites, basalts, andezitobazalts, diabase, latites (Pl. 65 f) tuffs. The holes are built with Roman bricks (Pl. 65 g, h), the mortar between containing nanofosili - an indication of the possible location of the lime quarry, which the Romans used for mortar. Species determined in mortar - *Retecapsa surrirella* (Deflandre) (Pl. 39i), *Watznaueria barnesae* (Black) (Pl. 65 j) and nanoconus discs (Pl. 65 k) prove Cretaceous age of the lime for mortar. The only rocks, of which can be produced lime in the region are the limestones of the West Balkan Carbonate Group (Callovian-Berriasian). The closest outcrop of the Cretaceous part of the group related to the gradual transition to Salash Formation in southern limb of the Belogradchik anticline is in Salash village. It is unlikely that the material is mined in more remote locations on the southern rim, as Varbovo, Replyana or Targovishte villages.
Sustainability and protection measures. The site is subject of study and is fenced and marked with information signboard with data about the ruins (Pl. 65 a,b). It is necessary to develop information boards devoted to the geodiversity of Rayanovtsi Formation, and Permian volcanism, left a deep imprint in the geological structure of the area.
Access. The site is situated near the road 1,5 km east of Granichak village.

a

b

Plate 65: a – late antique road station „Anishte" is situated near the road 1,2 km east of Granichak village; **b** – sketch of the archaeological geosite; **c,d** – the geosite is in under study and the ruins are covered; **e** – the walls are built of boulders from the Salash river; **f** – fluvial boulder of latite (red) from the Rayanovtsi Formation in the wall; **g,h** – openings in the walls of Roman bricks (40/40 cm); **i-k** – calcareous algae from the mortar between the bricks: i - *Retecapsa surrirella* (Deflandre), j - *Watznaueria barnesae* (Black), k – nannoconus disc

66. Medieval church „St. Troitsa" (The Red Church)

Location. 34 T 0639373 E; 4827549 N, 2 km from Borovitsa village.
Category. Historic buildings: the medieval church.
Geological setting. The church was built on the Upper Carboniferous sandstone of the Borovitsa Formation. In the surroundings are exposed breccia-conglomerates of the Karlovitsa Formation and transgressive lying on them conglomerates Belogradchik Formation.
Description. "St. Troitsa" Church was built in 1864, so it is a monument of culture. It is built of red sandstone and is popular among locals as the "Red Church" (Pl. 66 a, b). Located in the beautiful "Pine Stone" in the eponymous geological phenomenon known also as the "The Borovitsa Rock" (geotope 2). In antiquity here passed the road from Falkovets to the Roman Danube port Ratsiaria (geotope 68), destroyed by the Hun invasion in 441-447.
Connection with geology. With the exception of the bell tower, the walls are built with blocks of the red sandstone of the Belogradchik Formation, making it an integral part of the unique rock assemblage (Pl. 66 c, d).
Sustainability and protection measures. The church is surrounded by a high fence and there is no free access. It is supported by local authorities and is currently undergoing restoration. There is a project in the near future to build an asphalt road
Access. Access is by dirt road to the cemetery 2 km from the center of Borovitsa village.

Plate 66: a,b – Medieval church „St. Troitsa" („The Red Church") near Borovitsa village; **c,d –** the belfry and the Church on the background of the Pine Stone

67. Middle age mosque „Hadzhi Husein”

Location. 34 T 635555 E, 4831523 on the road to the Belogradchik fortress.
Category. Historic building: an ancient mosque.
Geological position. It is located near the stairs to the Roman fortress and Belogradchik Fortress on the red Lower Triassic sandstones of the Belogradchik Formation.
Description. Medieval Mosque "Hadzhi Hussein" was built in 1751. It has historical, architectural and artistic value, so it is partially restored and declared a monument of culture (Pl. 67 a,b). The mosque does not work, because there is no Muslims in the region, but it was declared immovable cultural heritage.
Connection with geology. Walls and minaret were built from white and yellow blocks, such as the Belogradchik fortress. They are from the Middle Jurassic sandstones of the Kreshtenitsa and Oreshets Members of the Kichera Formation (Pl. 67 c,d). It is assumed that for construction purposes are broken down huge blocks of sandstones on the southern slope of Belogradchik garland northeast of the town.
Sensitivity and protection measures. The mosque is located in an urban environment. It is fenced, but there is free access through the portal. It is powered by the local authorities and is in a good condition.
Access. It is located in the southwest part of Belogradchik town on the road to Belogradchik Fortress, near the Historical Museum.

Plate 67: Medieval Mosque "Hadzhi Hussein" in Belogradchik town; **a** - view from the fortress; **b** - view from the square; **c, d** - the walls of the mosque, built of white and yellow sandstone of the Middle Jurassic sandstones of the Kichera Formation

68. Ratsiaria

Location. 34 T 653465 E, 4853325 N, 1,3 km to the NW of with. Archar.
Category. An archaeological object: the remains of an ancient city Ulpia Trayana Ratsiaria declared a cultural monument, State Gazette 41/1965.
Geological position. The remains of the ancient settlement are located on old fluvial terrace of Archar river covering the Miocene sandstones of the Dimovo Formation.
Description. The settlement appeared in the I century as a military center under the name Ratsiaria. In the II century it became a permanent station of the Roman Danube fleet - Colony Ulpia Trayana Ratsiaria. Important road through Nis town connected the ancient city with the Adriatic. At the end of III century (283) The emperor Aurelian gave up Dacia province (in present-day Romania) and Ratsiaria became capital city of Coastal Dacia Province, situated between the Balkan, Timok and Vit Rivers. Ratsiaria was populous and wealthy city with shiny urban culture reflected in sculptures found, calligraphic gravestones and sarcophagi, in the architectural fragments and the elegant polychromatic mosaics (Pl. 68). Ever since the founding of the military colony in I century develops stonework. In the city there were temples of Greek gods Apollon and Dionysus and the Roman god Jupiter. In many yards there are still fully preserved walls, parts of buildings and pottery (Pl. 68 b), and in the field can be found Roman coins. Archaeologists have found many architectural details, gravestones and sarcophagi made of limestone and marble (Pl. 68 c,e,f). In Ratsiaria was widespread bronze casting, pottery, processing of lead, glass and bone. In 1986, Bulgarian-Italian archaeological expedition discovered 23-carat gold treasure consisting of four gold rings with precious stones, two earrings, two necklaces with original workmanship, hair pin, a massive gold bracelet dotted with Latin inscription and gold pin-hair (Pl. 68 d). The city was destroyed during the Great Migration, which began with the invasion of the Huns. In one of his many campaigns against Byzantium in 442, they crossed the Danube, burned the town and killed the majority of the population.
Connection with geology. Part of the monumental materials are supplied from abroad (mainly Aegean, Asia Minor and Propontian marble), but the main sources of marble and limestone were local quarries, developed by the Roman legions in I and II century. The main source of marble in the ancient province of Coastal Dacia were marble bundles in greenschist metamorphic rocks of the so called Berkovica low-grade metamorphic complex (Berkovska group) with Cambrian age. The marbles are mined in only marble deposit in Misia below Zdravchenitsa peak, west of the town of Berkovitsa, which operated until the end of the 80’s of the 20th century. The limestone belongs to the so called "Kaylaka Formation" of Maastrichtian age from the quarries at Kreta, Pleven (on the right bank of Vit river) and Kunino village, Vratsa district (on the left bank of the Iskar river). Evidence of this is found large stone blocks (square) and unfinished architectural details in ancient quarries in Kreta village. This was the “village of the stonecutters” - ancient vikus Lapidarium, whose name is read in many of the stone monuments of that time. In the other bricklaying center in Kunino, which supplied with material mainly Ulpia Oescus near Gigen village on the Danube, a number of unfinished and abandoned in place architectural details are found - Anton and Doric column capitels. Tiles and bricks with stamps of staying consistently military units - Roman legions, are also found: Fourth Flavia Legion, Fifth Macedonian Legion Seventh Claudius Legion, Twelfth Double Legion. The bricks are of low quality clay extracted from the Pliocene deposits of Opanets, Deleyna and Krivodol Formations.

Sensitivity and protection measures. The site is a monument of culture and falls under protection measures at regional and national level. Currently, the site is not guarded.
Access. It is located in the locality of Kaleto - 1,3 km NW of Archar village, access to it is from road to Darzhanitsa village.

Plate 68: Remains of ancient Ratsiaria: **a** - the excavation site; **b** – Archar village; **c** - architectural ornaments; **d** - the golden treasure; **e** - limestone sarcophagus

69. Historical museum Belogradchik

Location. 34 T 635666 E, 4831602 N, the street to the Belogradchik fortress.
Category. Site of cultural, historical and educational value, declared immovable cultural property.
Description. The historical museum is arranged in Panov's house, which was built in 1810, and as a representative of Pre-Balkan Renaissance architecture was declared immovable cultural property. The first floor is built of stone and second floor is issued (Pl. 70 a). The exhibition "Bulgarian history XV-XIX century" is dedicated to the socio-economic development of Belogradchik and the region during the 18-19th centuries. Exhibits (wooden plow, shinnics, harrows, rollers threshing) and two graphics of the Austro-Hungarian traveler Felix Kanitz give an idea of the way the land has been cultivated and harvested grain. Focus on livestock as the primary livelihood of the region, winegrowing, cotton and other crops, crafts: blacksmiths, homespun, shoemaking, pottery, tailoring, weaving of goat hair. Exhibited pottery – pitchers, rakatki, flat, pavurcheta, bowls, pots and coppersmith products - mencheta, boilers, ibritsi, plates, sahanes. Beauty and radiance of the exposed in "Gold" female ornaments from the second half of the 18th century (elements bride crown, earrings, bracelets, kubelii, buckles, forehead) give visitors with much pomp, charm and ringing. Preserved documents and graphics uprising of 1850, the siege of Belogradchik in January 1878 during the Russo-Turkish war, and photos and documents covering the fighting in Belogradchik during the Serbo-Bulgarian War in 1885 are available. Lapidarium in the courtyard of the Panov's house contains ancient remains, reminiscent of the Roman Empire.
Sensitivity and protection measures. As immovable cultural property Panov's house falls under the protection of the local municipal authorities.
Access. Located on the street to the Belogradchik Fortress.

Plate 69: a, b - Panov's house in the town of Belogradchik, which houses the Historical Museum was built in 1810 and is of real cultural value

70. Museum of Natural History

Location. 34 T 636272 E, 4831430 N, 1 km east of the center of Belogradchik.
Category. Geosite of scientific, educational and ecological value.
Description. Natural History Museum is unique in Northwest Bulgaria. It is housed in the building of the former "hunting lodge" in the park area of the town of Belogradchik (Pl. 70 a). The exhibition focuses on rare and endangered species of flora and fauna of northwestern Bulgaria, as well as unique local endemic species. It contains 520 exhibits, and the Fund has more about 2500, of which 39 are products of European and world protected species listed in the Bern Convention, and 128 of the exhibits have the status of endangered species under the Biological Diversity Act. Much of the models are stuffed animals, skins, skulls and herbarium plant species and paleontological material - bones of prehistoric animals such as cave bear and cave hyena. Also present and original photographic materials created by employees during the years of existence of the Museum. The collection includes samples of the geological heritage of the region - minerals, rocks and minerals. Over the years has collected a rich library containing popular science and literature with more than 600 titles.
Sensitivity and protection measures. Neat building is well maintained by the municipal government, and the collections of the museum exposition is constantly enriched by the staff of the Museum. Walk to the Museum was renovated under the European Programme for Rural Development (Pl. 70 b).
Access. Access is by tourist route № 5 from the city center in Thought stone cave to cave.

Plate 70: a – alley to the Natural History Museum on the tourist route № 5 is supported with funds from the European Structural Funds; **b** - neat building of the Museum in the Park of the town (the former "hunting lodge"), contains over 3,000 specimens of regional flora and fauna

71. Geological Museum Belogradchik

Location. 34 T 635300 E, 4831503 N near the Belogradchik Fortress.
Category. Object of scientific, research and educational value.
Description. Geological collection will be exposed in the new Visitor center near Belogradchik fortress, built on a project of Belogradchik with the European Regional Development Fund (Pl. 71 a). The territory of Geopark Belogradchik Rocks is a field geological museum. It has a remarkable geodiversity, which has no analogue in the European Geopark Network. An area of 1373 km^2 reveal rocks of all types and ages in the stratigraphic range from Proterozoic to Quaternary. Therefore, in the Application dossier is noted that it has no analogue in Europe. However, it loses its meaning if it is not appropriately represented to the visitors. The brief visit of a tourist is insufficient to meet this geodiversity in the field, even with the help of an experienced guide. Geological history of the region should be represented through a museum collection of minerals, rocks and fossils exposed in the Geological Museum. Besides geological formations, in the museum will be exposed archaeological artifacts, historical and cultural sites and their relationship with the geology of the region, such as sources of building material for the construction of the Latin fortress, Belogradchik Fortress, Red Church in Borovitsa and others. Geological map of the Geopark will be placed at a suitable place in the Museum with geographical coordinates and data on the composition, age and genetic origin of the samples. This information will be available in electronic form, with an extended version of data about the outcrops and rocks which will be available in the visitor center. Thus, unrestricted access to any information will be provided for the visitors of the museum, and everyone who wants to see the rocks in the field will receive the necessary information.
Sensitivity and protection measures. The new building is located near the Belogradchik fortress which is guarded around the clock. The Development plan of the Geopark provides continuous enrichment of the museum exhibition.
Access. Access is by road train from the city center to the fortress (Pl. 71 b).

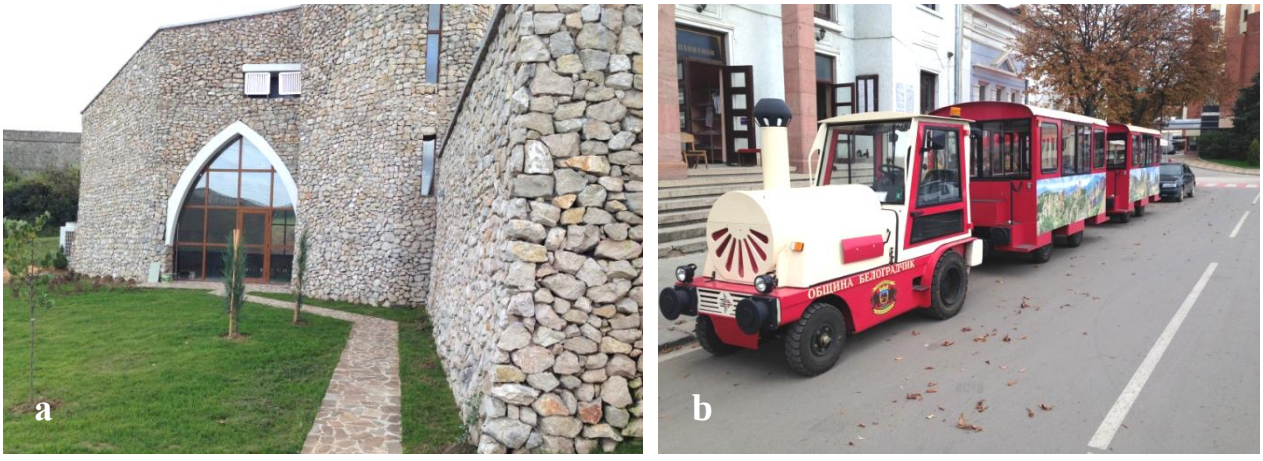

Plate 71: a – the newly built visitor center near the Belogradchik Fortress will house the new Geological Museum; **b** - new tourist road train connects the city center with the Museum

72. Astronomical observatory Belogradchik

Location. 34 T 0635140 E; 4831330 N near the Belogradchik Fortress.
Category. Object to scientific, research and educational value.
Description. Astronomical Observatory in Belogradchik holds the second largest telescope in the Balkans after the observatory "Rozhen". It was founded in 1961 with the idea of local physics teacher Hristo Kostov and became the first school observatory in the country. By mid-70s it is used by the Astronomical Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences for observation of artificial satellites of the Earth, and in 1976 the Institute takes full operation of the facility. Initially, the observatory has a 15-inch reflector telescope type "Cassegrain", which today is used for demonstrations of visitors. In 1969 was ordered a new 60-cm telescope "Cassegrain" produced by "Carl Zeiss" - Jena, which is mounted on the six meter dome and is the second largest in Bulgaria and the Balkans. In 1994 the observatory gets one more modern, automated and compact 14-inch telescope - "Celestron" Schmidt - Cassegrain system. It is mounted in a 4-meter dome, and goes CCD-camera Star-1. When visiting during the day tourists can see telescopes and equipment of the observatory and to observe the moon, the ring of Saturn, the satellites of Jupiter, Venus, stars, comets and galaxies. It is organized annual school on astronomy with international participation.
Sustainability and protection measures. The building of the observatory is near the Belogradchik fortress and since 1976 it became a division of the Astronomical Institute of the Academy of Sciences, and therefore fully supported by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
Access. Access is by the road train from the city center to the fortress (Pl. 72 b).

Plate 72: a, b –the astronomical observatory of the Institute of Astronomy of the Bulgaria Academy of Sciences, located near the Belogradchik Fortress